WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINE
MODERN LANGUAGES

In the concentrations in Modern Languages: French, Portuguese, Spanish all required courses are writing intensive, so, while it is difficult to point to one course, we can explain how we address writing in the discipline at the different levels. Our programs are three-tier, with each level building on the previous one. We have created our curricula with the aim of preparing our majors for graduate school. Roughly half of our graduates pursue graduate studies, so we teach our students the tools with which to do literary research, our discipline. At the same time, we feel we have to, at the same time, give those students who will use the language of their concentration other contexts, the skills to use the language in various registers.

FREN, PORT, SPAN 201 and 202:

In 201 students write bi-weekly papers in different registers: letters (formal and informal), descriptions, narrations, expositions. Each paper is read and returned with feedback in the form of a correction key, which addresses the mechanics of writing, as well as comments on content. A grade is given only when the student returns the revised copy. Students are taught to be aware of their writing, the context in which they are writing and to think of their reader. Since these courses are in a foreign language, there is additional practice with complex grammar, vocabulary, and syntax.

In 202 students continue to practice writing activities such as brain storming, writing clear and concise theses, writing appropriate and effective titles, presenting a logical progression of arguments, identifying and articulating themes in literary texts, identifying and articulating narrative strategies, using the vocabulary necessary for literary analysis. In this course students are introduced to the Modern Languages Association (MLA) style for documentation and practice researching sources through the MLA Bibliography database as well as in other academic databases. Essays in this course are also bi-weekly and revised before a grade is given. In preparation for the final research paper on a literary topic of 6 pages students write concise plot summaries, discuss themes and viable interpretations and collaborate on writing theses, titles, introductions, etc. All writing assignments in this course are revised before a grade is given.
FREN, PORT, SPAN 300-LEVEL

Students continue to practice the writing strategies learned in 202. They acquire more tools necessary for literary analysis and produce several essays during the semester and two formal 6 page literary analyses in the target language using the MLA style. There is preparation for these writing assignments in in-class collaborative writing activities and in low-stakes writing assignments done at home, such as plot summaries, tools for analyzing different genres, analysis of narrative voice, point of view, literary styles and movements, character development, theses, titles.

FREN, PORT, SPAN 400-LEVEL (Literature and film courses)

Students produce lengthier research papers on specific literary and critical topics. Typically students at this level research a project throughout the semester and build toward a 10-12 page final paper by choosing a topic, identifying possible themes, beginning to compile a bibliography, presenting their progress to the class, sharing bibliography with their classmates, writing a 5-6 page draft of their paper. After receiving feedback they continue to work on their project until the end of the semester when they present their research formally to the class and hand in their paper.

FREN, PORT, SPAN 420: Applied Grammar

Applied Grammar is conducted as a workshop in which translation is used as a means to polish writing style. Students translate writings of different registers -- journalism, literature (narration and dialogue), academic essays -- from English into the target language. Special attention is given to idiomatic expressions and sentence structure in the foreign language.